



AE micro 4 elements

HTTP://AESCFI.CA
TWITTER: @AESCFI



THANK YOU FOR READING!

You are currently holding (or reading on a screen with your head cocked sideways) the PDF edition of the fourth issue of *AE Micro*. *AE Micro* is an annual special edition of *AE – The Canadian Science Fiction Review* featuring stories no more than 200 words long. The theme for 2013 is *elements*. This two-page PDF is meant to be printed out and folded into an eight-page papercraft booklet. Follow the instructions in the next panel to fashion your own handmade issue of *AE Micro*. You can use this page for practice. When you finish, the pages should be in the order in which they are numbered here.

AE Micro Folding Instructions

1. Print out this PDF on a sheet of regular letter-size paper.
2. Crease the paper in half widthwise with the printed side facing out, by folding along the dotted line in the middle of the paper.
3. Fold along the other two dotted lines, with the printed side facing in.
4. Unfold the paper and lay it out flat.
5. Fold the paper in half lengthwise along the solid line with the printed side out, creasing it well.
6. Trim off each end of the paper by cutting along the solid lines, then unfold.
7. Fold the paper in half again widthwise with the printed side out.

Creative Commons Content

The content in this microzine is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivative Works License.

- You are free:
- to Share—to copy, distribute and transmit the work
- Under the following conditions:
- Attribution—You must attribute the work in the manner specified by the author or licensor (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work).
 - Noncommercial—You may not use this work for commercial purposes.
 - No Derivative Works—You may not alter, transform, or build upon this work.

- With the understanding that:
- Waiver—Any of the above conditions can be waived if you get permission from the copyright holder.
 - Other Rights—In no way are any of the following rights affected by the license:
 - ▶ Your fair dealing or fair use rights;
 - ▶ The author's moral rights;
 - ▶ Rights other persons may have either in the work itself or in how the work is used, such as publicity or privacy rights.
 - Notice—For any reuse or distribution, you must make clear to others the license terms of this work.
- <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0>

8. Starting from the fold, cut carefully along the heavy solid line until you reach the creases you made earlier.
 9. Unfold the paper flat and then fold it in half again lengthwise with the printed side out.
 10. Pick up the paper and hold it at either end with the folded edge at the top.
 11. Move your hands toward each other, allowing the middle section to come out to either side.
 12. Push the pages together until they meet to form a spine and arrange them so the cover is on the outside.
- To make the pages lie flat, go over each fold to crease it sharply.





The Canadian Science Fiction Review



AE and AE Micro are brought to you by:

EDITOR
D.F. McCourt

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR
Helen Michaud

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
Paul Jarvey

PUBLISHER'S READER
Erika Kiessner

The content in this microzine is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0>



HTTP://AESCI.FL.CA
TWITTER: @AESCI.FI

THERE'S SOMETHING APPEALING about the elements, the idea that everything can be broken down into fundamental building blocks that can be endlessly recombined to create new wonders.

In *AE Micro*, we give our authors only two hundred words to work with. But the letters and spaces that make up this microzine aren't the most important elements of the stories. In the following pages, you'll find settings both alien and terrestrial, characters with distinct points of view, emotions ranging from hope and despair to love and fear, endings, beginnings, and uncertain middles — expertly assembled to form seamless new wholes.

You could dissect these stories if you want, spread out their components and study what makes them tick... or you can just enjoy them as they are.

—Helen Michaud
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Dig for Fire by James Bambury

My decision is final.

We came here because I doubted the Emperor Ferdinand's wisdom in declaring war on the Czar. He commanded me to ensure victory by any means and at any price.

There is enough phlogiston in a few fragments of sunstone to burn throughout an entire winter; a few tonnes could supply an army bound for Russia. We needed only to get the ore from beneath the surface and seal it before it could ignite.

I gambled three aetherships on the assertions in those astronomers' papers: Could those dark spots really be solid islands amidst the flames? The destruction of *Salamanca* is completely my responsibility. I advised using sparing amounts of solder for the barrels of sunstone and creating extra makeshift containers. I feared returning with too little for our efforts. In my haste we have lost much more.

I would plead ignorance, but the aether-ship carried the men who had been burned or blinded when we first struck ore.

Now, take the *Habsburg* and the *Novara* back to Vienna, to Earth, with as much as the ships will carry.

Tell the Emperor he is correct. I am not worth my weight in sunstone.

Segregated World

by Holly Jennings

I don't remember when it started.

One earth year had passed since we landed on this alien rock and set up the force field that pumped oxygen into the hostile atmosphere.

The natives observed from the shadows.

"They're different," Dad warned. "He's different."

Now, as I watch the gills in his neck filter the air, I realize it's true. He couldn't survive within our element, nor me in his. Whenever we sit together, it's on opposite sides of the force field's edge.

Still, I recognize the emotion on his face.

"You're sad today," I tell him. I don't even know his name.

He murmurs something back, though the field muffles his words. He places a hand against it. I splay mine over his. Despite his pointed fingers, our hands look the same, and I can feel the heat from his.

Soon, our parents come and drag us away, both angry, both cursing, like the force field is nothing more than a mirror, reflecting the similarities between them.

I wave goodbye, smiling. My friend frowns in return. It doesn't matter. We'll both be back tomorrow, like every day.

Elementary Mechanics

by Phillip Hall

Psychoanalysis is like car mechanics: disassembled, repair, then reassembly, always using the same number of parts. Sometimes, when we put a personality back together, psychoanalysts are asked to leave out a troublesome element.

The Defence Department figured it would be a good idea if special forces were not inhibited by conscience. Unnecessary baggage they called it. So they tasked my team at the army hospital with re-engineering commando psyches.

When they set up the subsequent mission we were invited into the situation room to watch live feeds. See our car being test run. I couldn't go. I was sick. I saw the CCTV.

The operation went well, if you don't count the collateral damage. Only half a platoon was used. The target was taken out. So were several innocent bystanders who got in the way. The generals weren't worried. Delighted more like.

Backslapping all round.

Then the door burst open and the other half-platoon entered. They shot dead everyone in the room. Then they shot their way out of the building. Turns out they had no conscience about selling out to the other side.

P.S. It doesn't work with cars either.

Orbital Elements of the New Moon

by Benjamin Jacobson

I circle around her, a blue drain in an ocean of speckled darkness. She pulls me in.

e =eccentricity

Yet each orbit she fails to catch me and I cycle again in and out of her embrace.

i =tilt

Sometimes I lose sight of her. My mind slips or the damned algae clouds my vision.

w =twist

Algae keeps me alive in this floating Dutchman, consuming my waste, enriching the fluid in my lungs with oxygen and feeding the creatures that live in my bowels, so that I can digest them in turn.

When I'm close to her, I stare down at the continent that holds the man who created this miracle of death prevention, a suit that can sustain a person in the void, indefinitely. I know when he walks outside that he's in my sight. I scream at him though the vibration makes it only to my faceplate, "Why?"

v =angle now

Why a suit of perpetual life support, but limited propulsion?

The Cloud

by Rich Larson

It started in the air, a dark blot in a radioactive-yellow sky. It grew like a bruise up there, dividing and multiplying. Addy's class drew pictures of it looming by the sun — her darkest crayon down to nubs. I told her I loved it before I put it in a drawer.

A week later, the Cloud touched the water. It spread across the sea like ice skimming a pond in winter. It ate holes in the ships and when the whales tried to surface, they came out as steaming tonnes of processed meat. The television is broken today. I told Addy.

The Cloud touched shore and the earth turned to silvery sludge. Trees stripped to skeletons, rock trickled away. A preacher said our minds would become one inside the living vapour. A minivan convoy drove out to meet the Cloud, everyone else drove inland. Addy got to sit in front.

By the time the networks fell, we had all seen the images. Skin to tendrils, bone to powders. In the end, it was all the Cloud.

Addy watched me build the bonfire: evacuation notices and motel Bibles. I told her pills are candy. We already smell like ash.